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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries in Ohio were surveyed to determine the existence and content of training in customer service offered to library employees in the circulation and reference departments. Surveys were mailed to 127 libraries, and achieved a return rate of 68% (n=87). The survey contained questions about customer service training for both new and continuing employees. Results include: (1) 51% of the surveyed libraries offer formal customer service training for new employees, 49% do not; (2) 63% of the libraries which offer customer service training for new employees also offer training for continuing employees; (3) the majority of libraries trained new employees in library policies, location of primary resources and services, equipment training, referrals, and the library's mission, and the majority of libraries trained continuing employees in library policies, equipment training, how to positively meet customer expectations, emergency procedures, and dealing with irate or frustrated patrons; (4) 63% of libraries use prepared training materials for new employee training, and 48% of libraries use prepared materials for continuing training; (5) the majority of libraries require attendance for both new and continuing employee training; and (6) 76.5% of libraries provide funds for staff to seek training outside the library system. Appendices include a list of institutions to which the questionnaire was sent, a copy of the questionnaire with tabulated results, and copies of transmittal and follow-up letters. (Contains 43 references.) (Author/SWC)

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CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Library Science

by

Elizabeth L. Plummer

July, 1996

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries in the state of Ohio were surveyed as to the existence and content of training in customer service offered to Public Services employees. Public Services staff were defined as those library employees employed in the Circulation and Reference Departments. Surveys were mailed to 127 libraries, and eighty-seven were returned for a response rate of 68%. The survey was composed of two sections. One probed formal customer service training for New Employee Orientation. The other section sought information about Continuing Customer Service Training after orientation for new employees.

Formal programs of customer service training for new employees were reported by forty-three (51%) libraries; forty-two (49%) did not offer this training. Libraries were also asked if their customer service training was available to Public Services staff after new employee training was completed. Twenty-seven of the forty-three libraries with formal customer service programs responded affirmatively. The content of training for New Employee Orientation emphasized information about the library and its procedures. Most mentioned topics were library policies, location of primary resources and services, equipment training, making referrals to other departments or employees and the library's mission. Communication skills were not taught by many libraries. Continuing Customer Service Training emphasized more training in communication skills. Library policies and equipment training were the two most mentioned topics, but these programs also taught on how to meet the customer's expectations, dealing with irate or frustrated patrons, complaint procedures, and helping patrons with special needs.

Prepared training materials were used in New Employee Orientation by twenty-seven libraries (63%) and in Continuing Customer Service Training programs by thirteen libraries (48%). They consisted mostly of written materials. Instruction was usually provided by the Circulation or Reference Department Supervisor and consisted of individual training in both programs. The majority of responding libraries required the training for New Employee Orientation and Continuing Customer Service Training.

All libraries were asked if funds were available for library staff members to seek further training outside the library system. Of the responding libraries, sixty-five (76%) provide funds. Respondents were asked about who was involved in the formation of training programs. The library administration, professional librarians, department heads, and support staff were identified by the libraries as being primarily involved in the formation of the customer service training programs.

The survey results revealed that approximately half of the academic libraries in the state of Ohio have formal programs of training in customer service for new employees. Less than half of the libraries have training programs for Public Services staff after new employee training is finished. Further studies should be conducted using demographic data as to the reasons why one-half of the libraries do not have customer service training programs.

Master's Research Paper by

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B.A., Heidelberg College, 1975

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Preface

Five years is a long time to pursue a degree. In fact, it has seemed like an eternity. Finally, I can see the end in sight.

I wish to thank God for giving me a loving and patient husband, Donald Plummer. He has typed countless papers for me, taken care of our sons so I could study, and cooked many meals. He has not complained about the money we have spent on this degree, when we could have spent it on remodeling the house or buying a newer car. Thank you, Don.

My sons, Charles and Matthew Plummer, have given up many nights and weekends when we could have had family activities so I could study. They have done countless chores to help free my time so I could study. Thank you, Charles and Matt.

Jane Kohlenberg, Laura King, and I spent many hours in the car driving together to Kent State University to pursue our degrees. I wish to thank them for their encouragement.

My many friends, especially Tom and Alice Cook, and my extended family, have been an endless source of support for me. They have encouraged me to keep pursuing the degree, especially during the many times I felt like quitting.

I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Richard Rubin, for his patience. He has endured countless delays in late drafts due to my hectic work schedule. I appreciate the high standard of excellence he sets. Thank you, Dr. Rubin.

Finally, I wish to thank the faculty and staff of the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science, Kent and Columbus campuses, for the excellent education they have given me. I appreciated the generosity of the faculty and staff in giving their time to help students. Thank you.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Crucial to an academic library's mission is its public image. How it is perceived by the board of trustees, the administration, the faculty, the students, and the public often influence budgetary decisions. Is the library viewed as friendly and accessible, or as an institution where one cannot find materials, cannot understand the computer technology, and where the staff is not helpful?

The library staff, from the student assistants to the library director, decides the help or lack of help the patron receives. Are the staff friendly and willing to listen, or do they sit behind their desks and appear unapproachable? Is the public services staff sufficiently trained in how to operate the online catalog, the CD-ROM products, and the printers, in order to offer patrons assistance? Can they answer reference and directional questions correctly, or refer patrons to the proper department or person? What training is provided to these employees to help patrons in meeting their information needs?

A literature review from 1984 to 1994 on the ERIC and Library Literature databases revealed that literature on customer service training was practically nonexistent. Since 1994, many books and articles have been published describing how to develop and implement customer service programs in various types of libraries. The term *"customer service"* has become very popular in private business circles. Broadly defined, customer service is an attempt to train personnel and develop systems to be responsive to the needs and expectations of customers. By doing this, companies hope to make satisfied customers, thereby ensuring repeat business.

Businesses are redesigning training, job descriptions, procedures, and departments to deliver their products or services to customers quickly and efficiently. The goal is that products and services will be delivered right the first time, and customers will experience no aggravations. Leonard A. Schlesinger and James L. Heskett, in "The Service Driven Service Company," explain the idea of putting customers first this way:

> Putting customers first means focusing on how and where they interact with the company. That, in truth, means focusing on the workers who actually create or deliver the things customers value - a spotless hotel room, a quick and easy refund, a fresh, inexpensive sandwich. In companies that are truly customer oriented, management has designed (or redesigned) the business to support frontline workers' efforts and to maximize the impact of the value they create. New job definitions and compensation policies are critical parts of the redesigned systems. The product is economic performance that is startling companies with the performance of traditional industry competitors.[1]

To illustrate the difference in emphasis between libraries and business, the term *"customer service"* does not appear in the ERIC or Library Literature databases from 1984 to 1995. *"Customer service"* appears in the ABI INFORM database (1971 -1995) more than 9,000 times.

This research proposed to study the training given Public Services staff members (Circulation, Reference Services) of academic libraries concerning responding to the patrons' requests and needs for information. The hypothesis was that little or no training was given academic library staff members in how to fulfill patrons' needs.

For this study, the term *academic library* was restricted to libraries belonging to higher-education institutions operating not for profit. *Training* was defined as formal training programs in customer service offered to public service employees by library or institution administration. *Customer service* was defined as all contact with patrons by the public services staff. Included in this definition was directional assistance, telephone calls, written requests for assistance, reference help, and the many other contacts between the library's employees and patrons. *Patrons* were considered information seekers who visited the library building, who telephoned, and those who sent correspondence by letter, fax machine, or electronic mail. *Public services staff* was defined as those library employees employed in the Circulation and Reference Services departments.

Studying the level of customer service training in academic libraries in the state of Ohio highlighted the extent of training or lack of it. It provided research regarding what academic libraries are currently doing in the area of customer service. Delineating the kind of training, the

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[1]Leonard A. Schlesinger and James L. Heskett, "The Service Driven Service Company", Harvard Business Review (Sept.- Oct. 1991): 77.

content of the training, and to whom it was given gave meaningful information about the nature of customer service training.

In this age of budget cutbacks and academic libraries' having to justify expenditures, academic libraries must be perceived as friendly and accessible places where staff is willing and helpful to meet patrons' information needs. Learning what is actually happening in working with patrons will help libraries improve their efforts to satisfy patrons. This will help library science by improving libraries' public image, thus helping create and increase public support for library funding.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Library and Information Science Literature

In assessing the customer service training given to staff at academic libraries, a literature review before 1994 using ERIC, Library Literature, Periodical Abstracts, Ohio Link, and OCLC databases revealed very few articles and books on the subject. A perusal of books on library personnel theory and practices revealed none that contained any information on the subject.

The reason perhaps for this lack of literature is the library profession's lack of awareness of the subject. Typical of this is a 1987 survey of University of Rhode Island's library student employees and their supervisors.[2] Student employees were important to the University of Rhode Island (URI) libraries. They constituted about 75% of the workforce.[3] Nights and weekends were primarily staffed by student employees. On Saturdays, no professional librarian worked, and on Sundays, one librarian and several clerical staff worked.[4] Michael Vacino, Jr., Chair of Technical Services, and Martha H. Kellogg, Assistant Acquisitions Librarian at the University of Rhode Island Libraries sought to study, "Who are the typical student employees? What are the conditions of their employment as perceived by the students and the staff who hire, supervise, and train them?"[5] However, not one question was asked of the students about training to serve the public or problems experienced while working with the public. Staff members were asked to

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[2]Michael Vacino, Jr., and Martha H. Kellogg, Student Employees in Academic Libraries: Premise and Potential (University of Rhode Island, 1987), 3.

[3]Ibid., 5.

[4]Ibid., 7 - 8.

[5]Ibid., 5.

complete a questionnaire about the qualifications and skills of student employees they liked to hire. Skills such as typing, familiarity with computers, and familiarity with library systems such as OCLC, reference tools, and LC classification were mentioned, but interpersonal skills used in working with patrons and colleagues were not mentioned.

Another way to gauge customer service training given to staff members is through study of student employee personnel manuals. In 1991, the Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management Services, surveyed their 119 member institutions about information desks, their staffing, their functions and how they relate to the other service points within the particular library.[6] Of the responding libraries, 43% offered informational services 80% to 100% of the time they are open. Paraprofessionals were the predominant form of staffing at thirty-two libraries.[7] Librarians were rarely used to staff information desks.[8] Training was mostly on-the-job (thirty, with twenty-five providing procedures manuals).[9] One-on-one training and observation were also used.[10] Very few libraries were using video (five) and software (six).[11] Training occurred in a short period of time, with 67% giving only one to two weeks of training before placing a person at

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[6]Association of Research Libraries. Spec. Kit 172, Information Desks in ARL Libraries. (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1991), Flyer 172.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., 4.

[9]Ibid., flyer 172.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., 5.

the information desk.[12] No questions regarding customer service training were asked in the questionnaire. Several institutions sent training materials, which helped illuminate the customer service training given staff members.

The University of Illinois Information Desk instructions provided a few short sentences of instruction:

> Patrons are hesitant to approach someone who has his or her head buried in paperwork or is engaged in telephone and personal contacts. If on the phone or assisting someone else when a patron approaches, attempt to let the approaching person know you will be able to assist him in a brief time period. A positive enthusiastic public service attitude is of primary importance. Respond to all requests for assistance with courtesy and promptness.[13]

The Michigan State University Information Desk Student and Staff Training Manual provides a five-page section entitled, "Communication Skills." They preface their remarks with:

> The Information Desk is not only a place that gives out information, you are also responsible for directing patrons to other areas where they can get assistance. Therefore, it is very important to understand what question the patron is asking. Sometimes, this is an easy task; other times, problems of various kinds can create communication barriers and result in a confused and frustrated patron. The following are some of the problems and how to deal with them. The key to addressing all of these situations is LISTENING first; then, by some of the suggestions mentioned.[14]

The section discusses dispensing with library acronyms such as OCLC, ILL, and library terminology, such as serials and databases. Use terms the patrons understand.[15] Employees are asked to empathize with irate patrons and try to solve the problem. Special skills for helping

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[12]Ibid., flyer 172.

[13]Ibid., 41.

[14]Ibid., 144.

[15]Ibid., 104.

disabled and foreign patrons are discussed. Guidelines in making referrals to the Reference Desk are outlined.[16]

The Ohio State University Libraries Information/LCS Assistance Desk Manual: Policies and Procedures details conduct of the Information Desk staff under the heading, "General Considerations."[17] It begins with:

> The public needs to know you are approachable. Approachability is very important when working a public service desk. Make eye contact with people passing the Desk. Remember to SMILE! When a person approaches the Desk, move or turn toward the patron. If you are busy with others, acknowledge the newcomer with a nod or a smile.[18]

Instead of sitting behind the desk, the manual advises the staff to circulate among the online catalog terminals to see if any patrons need assistance. The staff is encouraged to be good listeners and avoid blatantly contradicting a patron.[19] Use of open and follow-up questions is recommended. Library terminology should not be used. Advice is given on helping those for whom English is a second language.[20]

The University of Texas at Austin Percy Castaneda Library PCI Information Desk Staff Training Manual has a "General Considerations" section that is almost word for word the same as Ohio State University's Libraries "General Considerations."[21]

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[16]Ibid., 106 - 107

[17]Ibid., 140.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., 141.

[21]Ibid., 156 - 157.

Norman Roberts and Tania Kann reported in 1989 of a survey of fifty-two university and polytechnic librarians in Great Britain and Scotland. The survey was seeking information about forms of continuing education and training in their libraries.[22] Initially, questions were asked concerning induction (orientation) training for new employees. The content of these programs was defined as:

> those activities and classes of information which new entrants are required to be familiar with to carry out their duties effectively. At the most basic level, these may cover such practicalities as working conditions, location of departments, staff structures and duties. At a more general level induction programmes may include the role of the library in university or polytechnic contexts, the work of other departments and the teaching of specific skills. The transmission of such information may be undertaken through formal, systematized methods of teaching and demonstration, or informally, on a 'need to know' basis, or on a 'find out for yourself' basis, or through a combination of methods.[23]

Customer service training is not mentioned. It is also not mentioned as a form of education for librarians following orientation.

The Department of Library Media Technology at Northland Pioneer College, Hollbrook, Arizona, developed a course to train new and existing college work-study students to work in the Learning Resource Center at Northland Pioneer College.[24] Upon completion of the course, the students were expected to, "use appropriate etiquette when dealing with patrons either in person or

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[22]Norman Roberts and Tania Kann, "Continuing Education and Training for Academic Library Staff," Journal of Librarianship 21 (April, 1989): 109.

[23]Ibid., 127.

[24]Allen P. Rothlinsberg, Training Library Work-Study Students for Academic Credit: A Way to Address the Accountability Factor (Holbrook, Arizona; Northland Pioneer College, 1992), 3.

by telephone."[25] Instruction was done by role playing using actual questions received by the reference staff. Telephone etiquette was gleaned from actual telephone experiences.[26]

In 1982, Susan M. Rawlins reported on an experiment conducted at the University of Evansville, Evansville, Indiana. Tests were made to learn whether student assistants trained by means of computer assistance in circulation procedures were as well trained as student assistants in a control group who received the traditional lecture and question-and-answer format.[27] The format consisted of three to five frames of information on a computer screen; a question was presented which could be typed in by answering a question on the keyboard.[28] The topics covered included aspects of customer service such as how to refer a patron to reference, how to correctly handle telephone calls, how to take messages, and how to charge out books, but did not include instruction regarding how to handle irate patrons. Results showed that students who completed computer-assisted instruction did better in a follow-up examination than did those taught the traditional way.[29]

In a follow-up to this study, Marvin C. Guilfoyle reported in 1984 that the University of Evansville had extended computer-assisted instruction to student employees wishing to work in the periodicals' section of the library. Program topics included a general introduction to the entire library, use of the periodicals holding list, circulation procedures for nonprint materials, and

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., 5.

[27]Susan M. Rawlins, "Technology and the Personal Touch: Computer-Assisted Instruction for Library Student Workers," Journal of Academic Librarianship 8 (March, 1982): 27 - 29.

[28]Ibid., 27.

[29]Ibid.

microforms and microform equipment. Training workers to help patrons was not mentioned. Guilfoyle wrote that the library was planning to use computer-assisted instruction to develop role-playing programs that would react to the specific responses of the trainee, and then branch into questions based on those responses. He did not mention if these role-playing programs were to be used to teach aspects of customer service.[30]

Philippa Dolphin wrote in 1986 of a series of video recordings used to promote social and communication skills for HERTIS, a technical and college library network based in Great Britain. HERTIS has over 250 staff members. New library assistants were required to attend six three-hour training sessions. Two of the sessions were devoted to interpersonal skills and dealing with awkward situations. In teaching these classes, Dolphin was appalled at the lack of suitable training packages. To solve this problem, she developed twenty-five trigger video recordings. A trigger video comprised short episodes that were designed to stimulate or trigger a discussion. The triggers were grouped on the tape into episodes; librarians talking to patrons, patrons speaking to library staff, library staff talking to each other, and finally particular management problems illustrated.[31]

Participants worked in pairs or in a larger group analyzing the responses to and feelings about a particular episode. Dolphin said that each trigger generated at least thirty minutes of lively discussion. Participants cited an increased confidence in dealing with awkward situations at work and greater awareness of the various types of response and behavior. No follow-up research was conducted to see if this confidence and awareness translated into better customer service.[32]

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[30]Marvin C. Guilfoyle, "Computer-Assisted Training for Student Library Assistants," Journal of Academic Librarianship 10 (Jan. 1985): 336.

[31]Philippa Dolphin, "Interpersonal Skills Training for Library Staff," Library Association Record 88 (March, 1986): 143.

[32]Ibid.

In the Fall of 1988, Temple University's Central Library System initiated a program of library staff orientation and public service training to supplement the technical and job-specific training already received by employees.[33] Gwen Arthur, Coordinator of Reference Desk Services, reported on the development and implementation of the session of the public services training focusing on communication skill. After completing the session, staff should be able to:

1. determine patron needs through effective communication and either provide the service or refer the patron to someone who can;
2. greet and interact with patrons in ways which encourage patrons to ask for their assistance;
3. react politely, patiently, and pleasantly when problems arise at the desk .[34]

The customer service program was three hours long and was scheduled for three different dates during November/December, 1988. Since level of education and administrative skill do not necessarily equate with level of service skill, Arthur reported that all levels from clerk to paraprofessional to librarian and department head were asked to attend.[35]

The program focused on six aspects of service:

1. importance of quality service
2. components of service, including the service strategy, systems, customers
3. teamwork
4. communication skills, including image presentation
5. sensitivity to customers, including responsiveness
6. complaint management, including:
    a. remaining calm
    b. allowing the customer to vent
    c. asking questions
    d. suggesting solutions
    e. taking action[36]

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[33]Gwen Arthur, Customer Service Training for Public Services Staff at Temple University's Central Library System (Philadelphia: Temple University, Central Library Systems, 1990), 5.

[34]Ibid., 6.

[35]Ibid., 4, 6.

[36]Ibid., 7.

Arthur reported that the staff rated the program a 3.4 on a 4.0 scale, 4.0 being the most positive. They also indicated that many of the program's suggested strategies on how to work better with fellow staff, communicate with patrons, and deal with complaints, would be useful to them on the job and that they planned to apply some of them there.[37]

Temple did not measure on-the-job performance as a follow-up to the service program. As of April 1990, the library had just initiated a library-wide performance evaluation program, part of which focused on service skills for public services staff. During the semester following the library-wide service training, the Reference and Information Services Department introduced a department program focused on positive communications skills. The Central Library Systems Staff Orientation committee was evaluating the public services program overall and considering ways to insure that skills and information presented during training were indeed learned and applied.[38] Arthur did not report if the service training sessions continued after the initial session.

In the 1990s, libraries with budget reductions and the need to justify the library's existence to funding authorities have expressed more interest in customer service training for their employees. Nineteen ninety-four saw the publication of three books on how to develop and implement customer service programs in libraries. Customer Service: A How-To Do-It Manual for Libraries by Suzanne Walters offers a step-by-step approach for developing and instituting a customer service program. Her tips and suggestions are very practical. Her experience is mostly from a public library setting. Guy St. Clair's book, Customer Service in the Information Environment, deals with customer service from a more theoretical framework. Having been the past president of the Special Libraries Association, St. Clair's suggestions are geared for special libraries. Putting Service Into Library Staff Training by Joanne M. Bessler combines theory and practicality in

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[37]Ibid., 10.

[38]Ibid., 11, 12.

encouraging library managers to identify service ideas, transform these ideas into realistic goals, and to guide both new and experienced staff in fulfilling these ideals even in the face of adversity. It is suitable for all types of libraries. Listed below is a summary of the suggestions of the three books:

1. Customer service is important. The library must compete with all sorts of information services. If the library cannot deliver quality goods and services, people will go elsewhere. Free services that are not quality are of no value to the patron. The way in which products or services are delivered is important enough that people are quite often willing to pay, even to pay extra, for it.[39]

2. Customer service matters. The majority of unhappy patrons will never complain. Ninety percent will never come back and thirteen percent will tell twenty or more people about their bad experience. It costs six times more to get a new customer than to retain an old one.[40]

3. Twenty percent of the patrons account for eighty percent of the business. These people are strong advocates for the library. The loss of one can create an impact.[41]

4. The commitment to customer service must come from the library director and upper management. They must lead with vision, practice what they preach, hold the employees accountable, empower their employees, take risks, and commit to a long-term program. It is not a quick fix.[42] St. Clair says that customer service programs require a long-term commitment of perhaps three to five years. The initiation, design, and implementation of any formal customer service program will be a major time commitment in the daily work life of the unit, requiring as much as twenty to thirty percent of staff time during the beginning stages. Later, not less than ten percent and no less than five percent of staff time will be required to keep it operational.[43]

5. Before the library can develop a customer service program, it must create an identity. What is its purpose? Who does it serve? If a mission statement has not been written, it should become the critical first step in this process. It should reflect the organization's goals and values; reality and also idealism. Staff members should be included in this process; they should be asked ways to gather patron and administrative ideas. Patron

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[39]Guy St. Clair, Customer Service in the Information Environment (New Jersey: Bowker-Saur, 1993), 13.

[40]Suzanne Walters, Customer Service: How-to-do-it Manual for Librarians (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1994), 1.

[41]Ibid., 2.

[42]Ibid.

[43]St. Clair, 55.

ideas must be sought in developing the mission statement. Who are the patrons? They include funders (governments, taxpayers, corporations, etc.), administrators, and users. What are their current needs and expectations of the library? To obtain information about the patrons, the library should collect and analyze existing documents and data that describe the community, its composition and identity, and what it has historically wanted from its library. Key members of the above groups should be interviewed to learn their current needs and expectations. Informal patron opinion can be sought by a message board that allows self-posting of responses. Issues can be identified that attract a great deal of interest. Invite members of the above groups to a focus group to discuss specific issues and challenges relating to the library's mission.[44]

6. Vacant positions offer the opportunity to recruit individuals who possess excellent customer service skills. They should possess good oral communication skills, exhibit cooperation and teamwork, have problem-solving and decision-making skills, possess enthusiasm, have a high energy level, and be flexible and adaptable.[45]

7. To develop a customer service program, the management must first sell the library to its employees. They must understand that their suggestions and ideas are valued. They must believe that their jobs are important, and that the library is performing valuable services. Employees with low morale will not give good service. Customers will perceive the library has a high quality organization if their experience matches their expectations.[46]

8. To create a climate of excellent customer service, the library's culture must be changed. A risk-taking environment must be created. Staff must be trained to provide patrons with good service even when it conflicts with library policy. They must be trained to develop informed judgments and make decisions. Managers need to delegate decisions regarding customers to the line staff. Creating an atmosphere of autonomy and trust enables employees to feel important and respected. They can make mistakes.[47]

9. Systems of accountability must be established. Walters suggested that job descriptions and performance-evaluation forms could be changed to describe and evaluate for levels of customer service. Systems for rewarding employees for providing good customer service and systems for reprimanding employees who do not provide good service are also methods of accountability.[48]

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[44]Joanne M. Bessler, Putting Service Into Library Staff Training: A Patron-Centered Approach Guide (Chicago: American Library Association, 1994), 5.

[45]Walters, 35.

[46]Ibid., 15.

[47]Ibid., 7.

[48]Ibid., 98.

10. Reward and recognition programs should be designed so that they influence many people. Awards should be for heroic acts, consistent day-in-day-out behavior, and some team or departmental awards that exemplify the internal or external customer service behavior the library wants to encourage. Rewards could be monetary or other forms of recognition such as spoken or written praise, and article in the library newsletter, praise in the presence of the boss, a prize parking space, time off, or a trophy, book, or other token of gratitude.[49]

Do academic libraries value employees who are motivated to provide good service to patrons? A study by Gilliam Allen and Bryce Allen suggests that they do. Using a content analysis of job advertisements received by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign between December 1, 1989 and September 1, 1990, they found service orientation to be the personality variable most mentioned as a selection criterion.[50] Service orientation was defined as "the disposition to be helpful, thoughtful, considerate, and cooperative and represents an important aspect of nontechnical performance (that is, performance of activities not specifically related to the technical functions of librarianship which include the knowledge of reference tools or the ability to perform online services.)"[51]

Questionnaires were sent to one hundred and twenty people listed as contact persons in the advertisements. The ads were supplemented by ads from the CAREER LEADS section of issues of the American Libraries journal for the same time period.

The contact people were asked to rank lists of selection criteria, personality variables, and methods for assessing the qualifications of job applicants for their relative importance. They were also asked to describe how they would evaluate service orientation in an applicant.[52] Service

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[49]Ibid., 61.

[50]Gilliam Allen and Bryce Allen, "Service Orientation as a Selection Criterion for Public Services Librarians," Journal of Library Administration 16 (1992): 69.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

orientation was ranked as the most important selection criterion and personality variable. The reference check was rated most important as a method of assessing qualifications. Contact people all reported using the interview as the primary method of evaluating service orientation in a job applicant.[53] Interestingly, personality testing was rated as least important of the methods for assessing job applicants, although service orientation as a personality characteristic had been ranked highly. Allen and Allen said that personality testing was a method of detecting these characteristics in job applicants. Their research showed that personnel directors valued service orientation in job applicants but were likely to use the interview and reference check rather than personality testing to decide whether an applicant had that quality.[54]

Can an academic library become responsive to the needs of its patrons? Charles R. Martell, Jr., in his book, The Client-Centered Academic Library, developed such an organizational model.[55] Martell argued that most academic libraries are structured according to a functional design. Libraries are organized by departments, such as acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, and reference. With the introduction of bibliographic utilities such as OCLC and computerized acquisition systems, there is less need for personnel in those departments.[56] Martell believed this would be a fortunate time to change the way academic libraries are organized. These personnel, Martell argued, could be placed in small (three to five librarians plus support staff) client-centered work groups. These groups would work closely with an academic department (such as physics, for example). One benefit of close interaction with the client would be a heightened awareness of

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[53]Ibid., 75

[54]Ibid.

[55]Charles R. Martell, Jr., The Client-Centered Academic Library (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983)

[56]Ibid., 69.

the information needs of the client.[57] All librarians in the work group would participate in reference, collection development, computerized literature searching, library instruction, original cataloging, and other information services. [58] Client-centered work groups would be governed by coordinating councils that would insure that individual work groups act in a manner consistent with the needs of the related groups (such as between physics and mathematics).[59] The benefits of this approach, Martell argued, were that clients would be served better, and that librarians would enjoy their work more, since they were doing many different tasks and not just tied to one department and to one task.

In the literature reviewed, there has been no follow-up research that has shown whether or to what extent training library employees in customer service leads to improved service for library patrons. Is there any research that suggests customer service training leads to improved effectiveness in meeting patrons' expectations and needs? The Columbus, Ohio Metropolitan Public Library was featured in an American Library Association teleseminar held at their annual conference in 1994. The library has developed two training programs to give better customer service. The first is called CLASS (Customer Leaving Appreciated, Satisfied, and Sold). Statistics were not given regarding the effectiveness of this program. The second program is called STYLE (Service Techniques Yielding Library Effectiveness). This program is a commitment to reference accuracy. The staff is trained to realize they are part of a team and are interdependent.

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[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid., 72.

[59]Ibid., 76.

Through unobtrusive reference surveys, the library has discovered that accuracy has increased. No actual statistics were cited.[60]

How many academic libraries do provide customer service training to their employees? There are no reliable statistics. As mentioned previously, the Association of Research Libraries survey of their member institutions in 1991 revealed fifty-five institutions offering some sort of training for paraprofessional and student staff in answering directional, informational, and holdings questions. Gwen Arthur reported of an electronic mail query over Library listservs LIBREF-L and LIBAD-MIN-L in Fall, 1992, asking academic librarians to report customer service training initiatives. Many reported customer service training programs, but Arthur failed to give any statistics about how many.[61]

Business Literature

What can business literature reveal about customer service? Research studies have documented that good customer service is crucial to the success of an organization as it generates repeat business. In 1969, Philip Kotler and Sidney J. Levy expanded the theory of marketing to include nonbusiness organizations.[62] Previously, marketing had been seen as the "task of finding and stimulating buyers for the firm's output."[63] They postulated that marketing should be seen

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[60]Achieving Breakthrough Service in Libraries (Cambridge, MA: Kathleen Gilroy Associates, 1994), Video recording.

[61]Gwen Arthur, "Customer Service Training in Academic Libraries," The Journal of Academic Librarianship 20 (Sept. 1994): 219-220.

[62]Philip Kotler and Sidney J. Levy, "Broadening the Concept of Marketing," Journal of Marketing 33 (Jan. 1969): 10 - 15.

[63]Ibid., 10.

as, "the concept of sensitively serving and satisfying human needs."[64] All organizations have products, services, ideas, and clients or consumers that they serve.[65] Marketing then is seen as that function of the organization that keeps in constant touch with the organization's consumers, discerns their needs, develops products or services that meet those needs, and builds a program of communication to express the organization's purpose.[66]

Implicit in this new definition of marketing is the idea that the organization must serve its patrons. A dilemma for service organizations that do not produce tangible products is, how does one measure whether service is good or bad? In a manufacturing environment, precise specifications can be set for ensuring uniform quality; if these are not met, the product is rejected. In organizations that produce services, precise standards are hard to set. For those with a high labor component, performance often varies from producer to producer, from consumer to consumer, and from day to day. Their quality cannot be engineered and evaluated at the factory before delivery to consumers.[67]

In 1991, A. Parasuraman, Leonard L. Berry, and Valarie Zeithaml reported about ongoing research conducted since 1983.[68] They were developing a model to measure service quality for service organizations in four industries: retail banking, credit cards, securities and brokerages, and

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[64]Ibid., 15.

[65]Ibid., 12.

[66]Ibid., 15.

[67]A. Parsuraman, Leonard L. Berry, and Valarie Zeithaml, "Understanding, Measuring, and Improving Service Quality: Findings From a Multiphase Research Program," in Service Quality: Multidisciplinary and Multinational Perspectives, ed. Stephen W. Brown, et al. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1991), 253

[68]Ibid., 253 - 268.

product repair and maintenance. To find data for this model, they developed a survey instrument called SERVQUAL to measure consumers' expectations and perceptions of a company.[69]

Using focus groups, and one thousand surveys of shoppers in a retail mall, they found that consumers value:

1. *reliability* - the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
2. *responsiveness* - willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
3. *assurance* - knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
4. *empathy* - caring, individualized attention the firm provides to customers.
5. *tangibles* - physical facilities, equipment, and employees' personal appearance.[70]

The authors found that a key discovery of the focus groups was that service quality as defined by consumers is the discrepancy or gap between their perceptions and their expectations.[71]

From interviews with fourteen executives at four nationally known service companies in the four industries previously mentioned, the researchers identified four organizational gaps that contributed to the service quality gap identified by consumers. They were:

1. Gap 1 - CONSUMER EXPECTATION - MANAGEMENT PERCEPTION GAP
   Executives are unaware of critical consumer expectations or misread the importance of them. The example given by the researchers was that privacy and confidentiality in banking and securities brokerage transactions was extremely important to consumers, but executives in these industries seemed unaware of these expectations.

2 Gap 2 - MANAGEMENT PERCEPTION - SERVICE QUALITY SPECIFICATION
   The interviews revealed that even in instances where management was aware of critical consumer expectations such as the need of the appliance repair and maintenance firms to promptly respond to appliance breakdowns, resource constraints, market conditions, and/or management indifference might prevent them from setting specifications to meet those needs.

3. Gap 3 - SERVICE QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS - SERVICE DELIVERY GAP
   Even when formal specifications were in place for performing services well, the actual performance fell short of those specifications. Executives mentioned as the cause of

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[69]Ibid., 257.

[70]Ibid., 261.

[71]Ibid., 257.

these problems the critical role of contact personnel and the wide variability of their performance, and the consequent difficulty in maintaining uniform standardized quality.

4. Gap 4 - SERVICE DELIVERY - EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS GAP
   One potential reason for poor perceptions of service quality by consumers is that their expectations are boosted by media advertising, sales presentations, and other communications to levels beyond a company's capability to deliver.[72]

In a subsequent article, the researchers conducted an empirical study to test their hypothesis of the five dimensions customers value most (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles). Nearly one thousand customers in the credit card, long-distance telephone, product repair, and retail banking sectors were surveyed. A comprehensive case study of one of the largest United States banks was also conducted. Three of the bank's regions were selected. Each region had at least twelve branches. Managers and employees from these regions were interviewed individually and in focus groups. They also conducted a survey of bank customers. From these surveys, the hypothesis was validated.[73]

To verify their hypothesis about potential causes of service quality problems, they conducted mail surveys of 1,936 customers, 728 contact personnel, and 231 managers in eighty-nine separate field offices of five national service companies, two banks, two insurance firms, and a telephone company.[74] These surveys revealed five service imperatives necessary to improving service quality:

1. Define the service role.
2. Compete for talent (and use it).
3. Emphasize service teams.
4. Go for reliability
5. Be great at problem resolution.[75]

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[72]Ibid., 256 - 257.

[73]Leonard L. Berry, Valerie A. Zeithaml and A. Parasuraman, "Five Imperatives for Improving Service Quality," Sloan Management Review (Summer 1990): 38.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid., 29.

It should be noted, however, that the above service imperatives do not themselves validate the service quality gaps hypothesized in the first article. Customer expectations and management perceptions that may contribute to service quality gaps were not defined. Also, criteria used to measure customer satisfaction were not explained.

In 1993, Mary Cronin Azzolini and John H. Lingle demonstrated that excellent internal customer service performance is crucial to the success of an organization.[76] By internal customer service, they meant, how the various departments (such as quality, research and development, and human resources) within an organization were serving each other. Do they support each other and work together, or is there rivalry, mistrust, animosity, and even quarreling?[77] Surveying 841 managers and executives in twenty-nine industries who were also Quality magazine readers, the researchers found that 88% believed internal customer service was the key to company success.[78] A major improvement effort was reported to be undertaken by 76% of them. Respondents were asked how customers would rate their overall service performance. Those that said they would be rated "excellent" or "above average" were 59% of the respondents, while 41% rated services received as "average" or "poor."[79]

Respondents were asked to classify their organizations in four ways: *"industry leader," "middle of the pack," "up and comer,"* and *"follower."* These results were correlated with the results of the internal service improvement efforts of those who thought themselves *"industry leaders"* and *"up and comers."* Of these two groups, 74% and 71% respectively reported

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[76]Mary Cronin Azzolini and John H. Lingle, "Internal Service Performance," Quality (Nov. 1993): 38-40.

[77]Ibid., 38.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Ibid., 39.

undertaking and being successful at internal service improvement. Those who were *"middle of the pack"* and *"followers"* only had 34% report service improvement efforts.[80]

Discussing the survey results, Azzolini and Lingle labeled those who rated their service *as* either *"excellent"* or *"above average"* as leaders, and those who rated their service as *"average"* or *"poor"* as laggards. Leaders were shown to have a strategic plan followed by careful measurement of the five key organizational areas: work processes, structure, systems, culture, and capabilities.[81] These measurements identified misalignment with strategy and customer requirements. Leaders not only gave good service, but also received it from their internal suppliers. They viewed the parts of their organization as interdependent to provide for excellent customer/supplier relationships. All parts of the organization must prove service excellence.[82]

What are the attributes needed by customer-service people to accomplish their job successfully? Wendy S. Becker and Richard S. Wellins in 1990 reported on their research that studied this question. They sought to:

1. identify the dimensions or job behaviors required for effective customer service from the viewpoint of both customers and customer service personnel.
2. assess the degree of proficiency with which the dimensions are performed from both perspectives.
3. examine the impact of customer service on customer behavior.
4. explore any differences between the perceptions of customers and those of customer service personnel.[83]

The authors derived a list of customer service attributes culled both from books and articles on customer service and from job analyses from their employer's database. From these sources,

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[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid., 40.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Wendy S. Becker and Richard S. Wellins, "Customer Service Perceptions and Reality," Training & Development Journal 44 (March, 1990): 50.

they developed two survey questionnaires, one for customers and one for customer service employees.[84]

Respondents to both surveys were asked to rank each dimension on two scales, importance and proficiency. The importance scale asked, "How important do you feel this dimension is to effective customer service?" Rankings ranged from five (extremely important) to one (not important). The proficiency scale asked respondents, "How well do you feel customer-service people use this dimension when they interact?" Responses varied again from five (always done well) to one (never done well).[85]

The second part of both surveys measured the impact of customer service on customers' decisions to do repeat business. One item asked, "How much does good service affect your decision to do business again with the organization?" On the five point scale, responses ranged from five (extremely great effect) to one (little or no effect). The second item asked respondents, "How often do you tell other people when you receive outstanding, adequate, or poor customer service?" Response categories were, "never," "occasionally," and "frequently."[86]

More than 1,300 customers from the United States, Canada, and Great Britain completed the customer survey. Nearly nine hundred customer service people from nine diverse organizations completed the customer service employee questionnaire.[87]

The results of the customers' survey revealed that customers rated all seventeen dimensions between "important" and "very important"; means ranged from 3.56 to 4.10. On the proficiency

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[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid.

scale, they ranked all but one dimension as "rarely well done"; means ranged from 2.54 to 3.24. All but three of the seventeen dimensions showed a full point difference between average ratings for importance and proficiency.[88]

In the importance segment of the customer service peoples' survey, the means ranged from 3.84 to 4.55. Proficiency ratings ranged from 3.16 to 3.66. Proficiency ratings were nearly one point lower than the importance ratings.[89] The customer service people ranked the importance of the seventeen dimensions between "important" and "very important", but ranked their own ability to perform the dimensions much lower. Proficiency at performing the dimensions was ranked higher by the customer service people than by the customers themselves. This could lead many organizations to believe that their customer service is serving customers well, when it is not.

The second part of the survey measured the impact of customer service on customers' decisions to conduct repeat business; the data revealed that 97% of customers and 83% of customer service people stated good customer service greatly affected peoples' decisions to do repeat business with an organization.[90] When service was excellent, 57% of the customers reported telling others about it, while only 38% of customer service people believed customers talk frequently to others about excellent service. When service was considered poor, 65% of customers told others, while 75% of customer service employees perceived that customers told others of their bad experience.[91]

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[88]Ibid.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid.

Becker and Wellins concluded four principles from their research:

1. Service matters. Good customer service keeps customers coming back.

2. Organizations must monitor and evaluate the perceptions customers have of their customer service personnel. It is also important that they understand their own customer service peoples' views on the quality of customer service.

3. The job skills of customer service personnel need to be enhanced through training. The discrepancy between the importance and proficiency ratings on the surveys indicated this.

4. The list of customer service dimensions should serve as a criterion for selection and appraisal of customer service personnel.[92]

In 1995, Choy L. Wong and Dean Tjosvold reported on their research findings that sought to prove the following hypotheses:

1. The goal orientation of the company influences the customers' interaction with service providers and affects the customers' evaluation of service quality.[93]Goal orientation includes these three orientations:[94]
   cooperative: people believe that their goals are positively related so that as one moves toward goal attainment, others move toward reaching their goals.
   competitive: people believe that their goals are competitive in that one's goal attainment precludes or at least makes less likely the goal attainment ofothers.
   independence: occurs when people believe their goals are unrelated.

2. Companies that communicate cooperative, rather than competitive or independent goals have satisfied customers, encourage future purchases, and create positive attitudes - toward the service provider and service organization.[95]

3. Warmth and coldness interact with cooperation, competition, and independence to enhance or lower service quality.[96]
   warm behaviors: friendly tone of voice, smiling, closeness to addressee, and

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[92]Ibid.

[93]Choy L. Wong and Dean Tjosvold, "Goal Interdependence and Quality in Services Marketing," Psychology & Marketing 12 (May, 1995): 103.

[94]Ibid., 192-193.

[95]Ibid., 193.

[96]Ibid., 194.

constant eye contact.
cold behaviors:: crisp vocal tone, stern expression, distance from the addressee, and avoidance of eye contact.

Ninety-two undergraduates were recruited from a business course to participate. Participants were given a cover story to read that stated the bank was conducting an exploratory study to test the viability of expanding its student loan services.[97] They were escorted to a room where a fellow student posed as a bank representative. Two male and two female students were trained to act as bank representatives. Participants were interviewed for information about their creditworthiness and their need for private student loans. After the session, participants were escorted out of the room and given a questionnaire measuring the encounter. They rated on seven point Likert scales their satisfaction with the interview, their desire to patronize the bank in the future, their positive to negative feelings about the bank representative and the bank, their confidence in dealing with the bank in the future, the quality of service provided in the interview, the attempt of the bank to offer quality service, and their interest in being interviewed by the same bank representative in the future.[98]

Survey results did validate Hypothesis 1. Participants attributed high-quality company service to cooperation compared to competition and independence. When bank representatives were warm and cooperative, the bank was perceived to have high quality service. When they were cold and competitive, the bank was perceived to have lower quality service.[99]

Hypothesis 2, that the cooperative goal orientation of the bank should contribute indirectly to the firm's profits, was not supported by the results. The goal orientation of the bank had no significant effect on participants' confidence in dealing with the bank, patronizing the bank in the

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[97]Ibid, 195.

[98]Ibid., 196-197.

[99]Ibid., 198-199.

future, satisfaction with the interview, feelings toward the bank representative, or willingness to be interviewed by the bank representative.[100]

Hypothesis 3 stated that warmth and coldness interact with cooperation, competition, and independence, to enhance or lower service quality. The results did not support this hypothesis. Although the bank representative's communication style was important in deciding satisfaction with the service encounter, the warm or cold communication styles were not significant enough to affect the judgment of overall quality of the bank. Representatives were thought to be only performing their duties in carrying out the bank's cooperative or competitive mandate.[101]

Wong and Tjosvold suggest that how an organization perceives its goals with its customers guides its conduct of business and relationship with its customers. If the service organization perceives itself and its customers as having cooperative goals, then it will strive to satisfy the customers' needs and consequently provide quality service. If the service organization perceives itself and its customers as having competitive goals, it will try to maximize its own interest at the expense of that of its customers. Such service will be rated as poor.[102]

The above literature review has dealt with customer service from the perspective of private business. Are there any research studies which have studied customer service in public sector organizations?

Michael Barzelay, a professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts, with the collaboration of Babak J. Armajani, conducted an observational case study

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[100]Ibid., 199-200.

[101]Ibid., 201.

[102]Ibid., 201.

of Minnesota's state government from 1986 to 1990.[103] State government agencies in Minnesota had two levels of organization. *Line agencies* (such as social service agencies and scientific/technical agencies) worked directly with the public. These line agencies were overseen by centralized *staff agencies*. These centralized agencies wielded enormous influence over the line agencies because they controlled the money, labor, information systems, data, office space, materials, equipment, training, travel, etc., allocated to line agencies. Staff agencies exercised their authority according to laws and regulations whose consequences were rarely subjected to any analysis of the need for them. Staff agencies were generally known for their lack of responsiveness to what line agencies asked of them.[104]

The managers of these agencies placed a high value on the impersonal exercise of public authority. Actions intended to control others should be based on the application of rules, and no action should be taken without proper authorization. When official actions could not be fully determined by applying rules, professional or technical expertise must be relied upon to make the official action impersonal.[105]

Efficiency and the need to follow rules produced nightmares for Minnesota's line agencies. By the early 1980s, it took an average of ninety days to classify a new personnel position, sixty days to administer civil service examinations, forty-five days to produce a financial report of the previous month's activity, ninety days to fill a requisition for a product stocked by a vendor, sixty days to complete a simple in-house printing job, up to one year to be assigned a motor pool

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[103]Michael J. Barzelay, with the collaboration of Babak J. Armajani, Breaking Through Bureaucracy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 4.

[104]Ibid., 9-10.

[105]Ibid., 5.

vehicle, sixty days or more to pay a vendor, four months to have an electrical outlet installed, six months to one year to obtain a copy machine, and thirty days to get routine vacuuming done.[106]

In 1984, Governor Rudy Perpich and his Commissioner of Administration Sandra J. Hale developed an initiative called STEP (Striving Toward Excellence in Performance) which would oversee projects to improve work units' performance. [107] In the spring of 1985 they selected thirty-six proposals. All of the proposals were used as an opportunity to test a series of hypotheses about management in government. They were:

1. Closer contact with the customer provides a better understanding of the customer's needs.
2. Increased employee participation taps the knowledge, skills, and commitment of all state workers.
3. Increased discretionary authority gives managers and employees greater accountability for a bottom line.
4. Voluntary partnerships allow the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and other resources.
5. Using state-of-the-art productivity improvement techniques yields results.
6. Improved work measurement provides a base for planning and implementing service improvements, and gives workers information about their performance.[108]

In trying to carry out these projects, the Department of Administration executives realized it was necessary to change the culture of the state agencies. So ingrained were the beliefs of impersonal administration, economy, and efficiency, which managers and employees alike found it difficult to identify their customers.[109] Line agencies thought of themselves as providing services

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[106]Ibid., 16.

[107]Ibid., 38-39.

[108]Ibid., 40.

[109]Ibid., 10.

to users but resisted the notion of accountability to those users. Staff agency employees and managers saw their purpose not as to satisfy line agencies' needs but to control them.[110]

With some success, this program did help agencies realize other agencies were customers to whom they were accountable. Barzelay's research revealed that the culture of impersonal administration, economy, and efficiency, and disregard for the customer was pervasive throughout Minnesota state government during the 1980s. Although the findings are not valid for other governmental entities, it can be surmised that many of these attitudes may exist in other governmental agencies. Academic libraries may be viewed as "line agencies" which are responsible to "staff agencies" such as administration, personnel, accounting, and purchasing. Depending on the rules required by the "staff agencies" in a particular institution, some of these old attitudes may, to varying degrees, have crept into academic libraries' operations.

What this literature review clearly shows is that no direct research has been done to show how the needs and priorities of patrons are handled in academic libraries. No study has been done to determine to what extent customer service has been incorporated into the operating philosophy of academic libraries. These libraries therefore cannot identify if their systems operate efficiently to deliver excellent products and services to their patrons, or whether these "customers" are satisfied and come back, or what kinds of improvements in customer service may be needed and how best to effect these improvements.

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[110]Ibid., 11.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

To support or disprove the hypothesis that academic libraries in the state of Ohio offer little or no customer service training to their *Public Services* staffs, a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire was mailed to 127 institutions (Appendix A) listed in the Ohio section of the 1996 Higher Education Directory.[111] *Public Services* staff were defined as those library employees employed in the Circulation and Reference Departments. These institutions comprised two-year technical colleges granting associates' degrees, non-accredited Bible colleges, medical schools, graduate theological seminaries, four-year undergraduate institutions granting bachelors' degrees, and universities with both bachelors' degree and post-graduate degree programs. Excluded from consideration were for-profit institutions.

All these institutions have academic libraries and patrons who require assistance. Surveying different types of libraries gave a broader picture of the problem. Sampling a larger number of institutions allowed a sufficient response rate to make the survey results significant. To study this, it was necessary to develop a questionnaire. The objectives were:

1. to test the hypothesis that little or no customer service training is given Public Services employees of academic libraries.
2. to determine if such training, if given at all, is given only to new employees.
3. to identify whether such training is offered to all Public Services employees; those with no seniority and those with many years of experience.
4. to determine the content of such training. Does it consist of verbal instruction from supervisors, communicating with colleagues, written materials, video tapes, role-playing, seminars, classroom instruction, or some combination of any or all of the above?

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[111]Mary Pat Rodenhouse, ed., 1996 Higher Education Directory (Falls Church, VA: Higher Education Publications, 1996), 271-288.

5. to identify the aspects of customer service emphasized in any training. Does it consist of instruction from supervisors, written materials, videotapes, audiotapes, computer programs, classroom instruction, or materials to be studied independently?

The questionnaire consisted of sixteen questions with closed responses (Appendix B), and was organized in the checklist format. Many questions required a yes or no answer, but many asked the respondent to check all items in a list that might answer the question. Space for comments was not available, although several respondents did write brief notes.

The survey was composed of two sections. One probed formal customer service training for new employees (New Employee Orientation). The other section sought information about training offered to employees who completed New Employee Orientation (Continuing Customer Service Training). Employees eligible for this training could have been employed from several weeks to many years. In both sections, the questions were similar, so the results were discussed together in the Analysis of Data section.

Questionnaires were coded to learn who returned them. This was solely to contact those institutions that did not return the survey and requesting their assistance in completing the survey. To insure anonymity as guaranteed in the Letter of Transmittal (Appendix D), the codes will be destroyed upon completion of the research.

A post card (Appendix C) was sent to the sample requesting assistance in completing the forthcoming questionnaire. The survey was sent approximately one week after the postcard. Included with the questionnaire was a cover letter (Appendix D) requesting the participant's help and explaining the purposes of the survey.

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Data

One hundred twenty-seven surveys were mailed. Of these, eighty-seven were returned for a response rate of 68%. Comments were included on two surveys, but the survey itself was not completed. Findings are based on the data collected from eighty-five surveys.

Presence of Formal Customer Service Training Programs

Libraries were asked if they had formal programs of customer service training offered by the library administration, branch, or department, to staff of the public services department. It was assumed that this training would be offered to new employees. *Table One* shows their answers.

TABLE 1

Presence of Formal Customer Service Training Programs - 85 responses

	n	%
Yes	43	51%
No	42	49%
No answer	0	0%

Formal programs of customer service training were reported by forty-three (51%) libraries; forty-two (49%) libraries said that they did not offer this training. Some confusion occurred about what *formal* meant. Several libraries wrote that they do train in customer service, but it is not a prepared program but one-on-one instruction with the supervisor.

Nearly one-half of the responding libraries reported not offering formal programs of customer service training. Since demographic information was not asked, it is hard to learn the reasons why this training is not offered. Do only large or medium-sized libraries offer this training? Do libraries with small staffs and perhaps small budgets feel that this is a luxury that they cannot afford? Library directors with small staffs of one to five people might feel that they can

teach their employees to be helpful and friendly; since they work closely with the staff, they can monitor the employee/patron interaction. These issues require further study.

Presence of Continuing Customer Service Taining Programs

Libraries were also asked if their customer service training was available to Public Services staff after new employee training was finished (*Table Two*). Of the forty-three libraries that said they had formal training programs of customer service, twenty-seven (63%) libraries responded affirmatively.

TABLE 2

Presence of Continuing Customer Service Training Programs - 43 responses

	n	%
Yes	27	63%
No	14	33%
No answer	2	4%

The majority of libraries with customer service training programs for New Employee Orientation do continue customer service training for employees with seniority. Some who do not offer continuing programs may not feel it is necessary or have the funds to allow employees to upgrade or refresh their skills.

Only twenty-seven (32%) of the eighty-five responding libraries offer Continuing Customer Service Training. Less than one-third of the employees with seniority in these libraries can participate in customer service training programs. If customer service training is offered, it is given to new employees, and to a lesser extent, employees with seniority.

Content of Customer Service Training Programs

Content of New Employee Orientation

Content that might be part of customer service training for new employees and for continuing programs was explored. The responses are shown in *Table Three*. Only those

libraries that have formal customer service training programs for new employees and after new employee orientation responded. Multiple answers occurred, because libraries were asked to check all the items that applied.

TABLE 3

CONTENT ITEMS

	New Employee Orientation - 43 responses		Continuous Customer Service Training - 27 responses	
Content Items	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Library policies	42	98%	23	85%
Location of primary resources and services	40	93%	16	59%
Equipment Training	37	86%	19	70%
Making referrals to other departments or employees	35	81%	13	48%
The Library's mission	34	79%	12	44%
Telephone etiquette	32	74%	12	44%
Emergency Procedures	32	74%	17	63%
Employee demeanor	30	70%	12	44%
The employee's role in the library's mission	29	67%	12	44%
Dealing with irate or frustrated patrons	29	67%	17	63%
Complaint procedures	26	60%	16	60%
How to positively meet the customer's expectations	25	58%	18	67%
The role of the employee's department in the library's mission	21	49%	7	26%
Communication skills	20	47%	12	44%
Helping patrons with special needs	19	44%	14	52%
Problem solving skills	14	33%	13	48%
Treating staff as patrons	13	30%	7	26%
Other	4	9%	5	12%
None of the above	0	0%	0	0%

Concerning the content of New Employee Orientation programs, forty-two (98%) chose teaching new employees about library policies. The second most chosen item by forty (93%) libraries were information about the location of primary resources and services. Equipment training was the third most mentioned content item by thirty-seven libraries (86%). Emergency procedures were taught by thirty-two (74%) of the libraries.

Most of the responding libraries imparted information about the purpose and direction of the library. Thirty-four (74%) taught about the library's mission, and twenty-nine (67%) mentioned the employee's role in that mission. Only twenty-one (49%) emphasized the role of the employee's department in that mission.

Interpersonal skills training required for working in a library were also explored. Only twenty (47%) libraries listed communication skills as taught in their training. It appears that these skills were covered in several different topics. Making referrals to other departments or employees was taught by thirty-five (81%), and thirty-two (75%) instructed in telephone etiquette. Employee demeanor (smile, patience, friendliness), was discussed by thirty (70%) libraries. Treating internal staff as patrons were listed by thirteen (30%) libraries.

Working in a library often requires listening to irate or frustrated patrons and trying to solve their problem. Problems solving skills were emphasized by only fourteen (33%) libraries. As in the section listing interpersonal skills, these skills were taught in several other content items. Training was provided in dealing with irate or frustrated patrons by twenty-nine (67%) libraries, and complaint procedures were taught by twenty-six (60%) libraries. How to positively meet the customer's expectations was stressed by twenty-five (58%) of the responding libraries. Nineteen (44%) libraries reported training new employees how to help patrons with special needs.

Content in Continuing Customer Service Training

Subjects in Continuing Customer Service Training Programs were studied. Answers are shown in *Table Three*. The most listed content item as with the New Employee Orientation

programs was instruction in library policies. This was cited by twenty-three (85%) libraries. Next in number of responses with nineteen (70%) was equipment training. For New Employee Orientation, this was the third most listed response. How to positively meet customers' expectations with eighteen (67%) was the third most listed topic. This was listed in the middle range of items for New Employee Orientation. Perhaps libraries feel that this is a harder level of communication skills training and is best attempted after preliminary communication skills training.

In New Employee Orientation, teaching about the location of primary resources and services was second in importance, but only sixteen (59%) libraries, thought this was important in Continuing Customer Service Training. Evidently, it is felt that employees after new employee orientation should know the location of primary resources and services.

Training in interpersonal and problem solving skills predominated in the items recorded. As mentioned previously, training in how to positively meet customers' expectations was recorded by eighteen (67%) libraries. Dealing with irate or frustrated patrons was rated as important by seventeen (63%) libraries. Sixteen (60%) responses dealt with complaint procedures. Helping patrons with special needs was included by fourteen (52%) libraries. Making referrals to other departments or employees were listed by thirteen (48%) libraries. Twelve (44%) libraries each covered employee demeanor (smile, patience friendliness), telephone etiquette, and communication skills. Problem solving skills were stressed by thirteen (48%) libraries. Only seven (26%) libraries thought it necessary to include material on treating staff as patrons.

The nature of the interpersonal skills and problem solving training changed from New Employee Orientation to Continuing Customer Service training. Since the library's employees should have learned telephone etiquette and employee demeanor in new employee orientation, further customer service training beyond orientation seems to focus on the more difficult skills of helping irate or frustrated patrons and handling complaints.

The New Employee Orientation programs stressed the library's mission, the role of the employee in that mission and the role of the employee's department in that mission. Continuing Customer Service did not rate these items highly. Twelve (44%) libraries each mentioned the library's mission and the employee's role in that mission. Only seven (16%) libraries listed the role of the employee's department in that mission. The difference in emphasis might be that employees with several months of employment are probably aware of the library's mission and their role in it.

Training Materials

Libraries with formal customer service training programs were asked if they used prepared training materials in New Employee Orientation or in Continuing Customer Service training. *Table Four* shows their responses.

TABLE 4
TRAINING MATERIALS

New Employee Orientation - 43 responses			Continuing Customer Service Training- 27 responses		
	n	%		n	%
Yes	27	63%	Yes	13	48%
No	15	35%	No	13	48%
No answer	1	2%	No answer	1	4%

Of the forty-three libraries, twenty-seven (63%) used prepared training materials in New Employee Orientation. For Continuing Customer Service training, thirteen (48%) libraries used prepared training materials, and thirteen (48%) did not use them. Prepared training materials are being used more for New Employee Orientation than for Continuing Customer Service training. How libraries who do not use prepared training materials conduct customer service training was not studied. Are they conducting sessions where employees discuss certain issues in customer

service, or does the supervisor instruct the employee about how the patron should be treated? This is an issue for further study. If they do not use prepared training materials, they must rely on the expertise of the instruction; this might lead to inconsistency in the subject matter especially if different instructors teach the course.

PREPARED TRAINING MATERIALS

Libraries who responded that they used prepared training materials were asked to identify the type of training materials for New Employee Orientation and Continuing Customer Service Training. Since they were asked to check all the materials they used, multiple answers occurred. *Table Five* shows their responses.

TABLE 5

NATURE OF PREPARED TRAINING MATERIALS

Nature of Materials	New Employee Orientation - 27 responses		Continuing Customer Service Training - 13 responses	
	n	%	n	%
Written	27	100%	13	100%
Audio tapes	1	4%	2	15%
Videotapes	4	15%	4	31%
Computer programs	0	0%	1	8%
Other	4	15%	4	31%

All twenty-seven (100%) libraries that used prepared training materials in New Employee Orientation reported that they used written materials. These were supplemented by four (15%) libraries where employees watched videotapes, one (3%) library that used audio tapes, and four (15%) libraries that used unspecified other materials. None instructed with computer programs.

Those libraries with Continuing Customer Service training programs reported thirteen (100%) used written training materials. Supplementary materials included four (31%) with

videotapes, four (31%) with unspecified other materials, two (15%) with audiotapes, and one (8%) with computer programs.

All libraries used written materials. Many supplemented the instruction with other mediums. The easy availability of written material on the subject may explain the heavy use of it. Videotapes were the most used audiovisual mediums. They were used more in Continuing Customer Service Training than in New Employee Orientation. There is a lack of awareness of current videotapes, audiotapes, and computer programs that provide instruction on the topic of customer service.

Type of Instruction

The type of instruction was also explored for New Employee Orientation and Continuing Customer Service Training. All who responded that they have formal programs of customer service training could answer these questions despite whether they used prepared training materials. They were asked to check all the formats they used, so multiple answers occurred. *Table Six* shows their answers.

TABLE 6

TYPE OF INSTRUCTION

	New Employee Orientation - 43 responses		Continuing Customer Service Training -27 responses	
Types of Instruction	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Individual training by supervisor	40	93%	23	85%
Classroom instruction	9	21%	12	44%
Role-playing	3	7%	1	4%
Computer-assisted instruction	2	5%	2	7%
Unsupervised instruction involving written, audio, or visual material	16	37%	8	30%

Of the forty-three libraries having customer service training programs for New Employee Orientation, forty (93%) provided individual training by the employee's supervisor. Classroom instruction was used by nine (21%), while three (7%) used role-playing. Unsupervised instruction involving, written, audio, or video materials were provided by sixteen (37%) libraries to their new employees.

Those twenty-seven libraries offering Continuing Customer Service training programs reported that twenty-three (85%) libraries used individual training by the supervisor. Classroom instruction was using by twelve (44%) libraries, and unsupervised instruction was provided by eight (30%) libraries. Other means of teaching included two (7%) libraries that used computer-assisted instruction, and one library (4%) that had their employees engage in role-playing. Most of the libraries rely on one-on-one instruction by the individual supervisor.

Individual training by the supervisor was the most prevalent type of instruction for New Employee Orientation and Continuing Customer Service Training; a significant amount of instruction was also unsupervised. This may be due to the desire of the supervisor to have the employees study independently and then discuss with them what they have learned. More classroom instruction was provided in Continuing Customer Service Training than in New Employee Orientation. More groups of employees may be taught in Continuing Customer Service Training.

Who Provides the Instruction

Respondents were asked who provided the customer service training during New Employee Orientation, and Continuing Customer Service Training. They were asked to mark all who provided the customer service training; multiple answers were possible. *Table Seven* displays their responses.

Table 7 Who Provides the Instruction				
	New Employee Orientation - 43 responses		Continuing Customer Service Training - 27 responses	
Instructor	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Circulation or Reference Department Supervisor	35	81%		
Circulation Department Supervisor			19	70%
Reference Department Supervisor			21	77%
Human Resources/Training inside library	5	12%	4	15%
Human Resources/Training of parent institution	6	14%	6	22%
Outside Consultant	3	7%	7	26%
Other	11	26%	8	30%

Of the forty-three libraries with New Employee Orientation customer service training programs, thirty-five (81%) reported that the Circulation or Reference Department Supervisor provided the training. Human Resources/Training inside the library was used by five (12%), and six (14%) used Human Resources/training of the parent institution. Outside consultants were listed by three (7%) libraries, and eleven (26%) checked other. Comments written by the other box often mentioned the library director. Most of the training during New Employee Orientation is given by the new employee's immediate supervisor. In some libraries, it is supplemented by Human Resources/Training of the library or parent institution.

Libraries with Continuing Customer Service Training reported that twenty-one (77%) of the twenty-seven libraries had the Reference Department Supervisor provide the training. In nineteen (70%) libraries, the Circulation Department Supervisor also provided instruction. For eight (30%) libraries, unspecified others provided the training, while seven (26%) hired outside consultants. Human Resources/training of the parent institution provided training for six (22%)

libraries, and Human Resources/Training inside the library handled the program in four (15%) libraries. Most of the Continuing Customer Service Training given to Public Services employees is given by Public Services supervisors, the Circulation or Reference Department supervisor. Many libraries (63%) did supplement this training by using outside consultants or the Human Resources/Training of the library or parent institution. Since demographic questions were not asked, it is difficult to detect how many libraries had Human Resources/Training departments that could help them.

Is the Training Mandatory?

Respondents were asked if customer service training for new employees as well as those receiving Continuing Customer Service Training was mandatory. Of the forty-three libraries conducting customer service training for new employees, thirty-nine (90%) replied that it was mandatory. Two (5%) said that it was optional, and two (5%) did not answer the question. *Table Eight* displays the answers.

TABLE 8
Mandatory or Optional Training

	New Employee Orientation - 43 responses		Continuing Customer Service Training - 27 responses	
	n	%	n	%
Mandatory	39	90%	20	74%
Optional	2	4.5%	7	26%
No answer	2	4.5%	0	0%

Of the twenty-seven eligible libraries giving Continuous Customer Service Training, twenty (74%) said that the training was mandatory. Seven (26%) reported that it was optional. The responses to both questions show that most of libraries with customer service training programs for new and regular employees require mandatory attendance.

Funding for Training

All libraries that responded to the survey were asked whether funds were available for library staff members to seek further training outside the library system. Of the eighty-five responding libraries, sixty-five (76%) provide funds, while nineteen (21%) do not. Three (3%) libraries did not answer the question. These data show that most of the academic libraries in the state of Ohio are committed to providing funds for outside training in customer service whether they have in-house customer service training programs or not. *(Table Nine.)*

TABLE 9

Funds Available for Training Outside the Library System - 85 responses

	n	%
Yes	65	76.5%
No	19	22%
No answer	1	1.5%

Training Program Developer

Respondents were asked about who was involved in the formation of the customer service training programs *(Table Ten.)*

TABLE 10
Formation of the Program - 43 responses

Developers	**n**	**%**
Library Administration	26	60%
Professional Librarians	26	60%
Department Heads	19	44%
Support Staff	19	44%
Human Resources Department of Library	3	7%
Human Resources Department of Parent Institution	3	7%
Other Institution Departments	1	2%
Outside Consultants	1	2%
Other	2	5%

The library administration and professional librarians were identified by twenty-six (60%) libraries each. Department heads and support staff were mentioned by nineteen (44%) libraries. A variety of other sources were mentioned as involved. The human resources department of the library was consulted by three (7%) libraries, as was the human resources department of the parent institution by three (7%) libraries. An outside consultant was hired by one (2%) library, and one (2%) used other departments of the institution. Unspecified other sources were used by two (7%) libraries.

These data suggest that library administration, professional librarians, support staff, and department heads helped to create and design these programs. It is not possible from this question to detect the ratio of Public Service Staff to Technical Services Staff input in the design of these programs.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The hypothesis that very few customer service training programs exist in academic libraries in the state of Ohio was not supported. Over 50% of the responding libraries said that they had formal programs of customer service training for new employees. Since demographic information was not asked, it is not known how the other half of the libraries are providing quality of service to their patrons. Many respondents that did not have formal customer service training programs commented that they were small libraries with one to five employees and did not perceive the need for this type of training; informal customer service was provided by the library director. Another possible reason for the lack of formal customer service training programs is the perception that customer service training is a business model that is not applicable to nonprofit institutions such as academic libraries. This idea was expressed in a letter from a library director who chose not to complete the survey.

Over three-quarter (76%) of the responding libraries offer funds for training in customer service outside the library system. This includes many libraries who do not have formal customer service training programs. Why these libraries would pay to have their employees take this training and not have their own training programs is not known. One may speculate that with the day-to day pressures of operating a library and perhaps cuts in funding levels, the library administration has not taken the time to develop a program of customer service training for its employees; it may also feel that it is not financially viable presently. They may be waiting for an employee to take a course in customer service training and then institute a program for their library.

Less than three-quarter (63%) of the responding libraries that have formal programs of customer service training offered Continuous Customer Service Training to their employees beyond New Employee Orientation. This means that only one-third of all of the responding libraries' employees are receiving customer service training beyond New Employee Orientation.

For employees with many years of service to the library, it would be beneficial to have them refresh and upgrade their customer service skills and learn about library policies, resources, and equipment that they are not aware of. The majority (63%) of the libraries with formal customer service training for New Employee Orientation did perceive the need to offer customer service training to their employees with differing years of service. The rest (37%) have evidently not begun programs or do not see the need beyond New Employee Orientation.

The commitment to giving excellent service to the patrons is very important. Most of the libraries required the training. For new employee training, the use of prepared training materials by 63% of the library suggests a desire for consistency and a structured program that does not change from teacher to teacher. In training beyond new employee orientation, the use of prepared training materials by only 50% of the libraries shows willingness by some libraries to allow the teachers to structure the training according to their wishes or the perceived needs of the employees. How libraries that do not use prepared training materials conduct customer service training is not known. Are they conducting sessions where employees discuss the topic of customer service?

A significant problem with not using prepared training materials is the lack of consistency. Even with the same instructor, the nature of the instruction could vary from class to class. Employees may not have received the same training. This makes it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the training without a standard of reference such as prepared training materials.

The data reveal that the Circulation or Reference Department supervisors perform most of the training for Public Services employees. It may be supplemented by Human Resources/Training inside the library or the parent institution or by outside consultants. Questions were not asked about the qualifications or training of the teachers. According to the survey results, most of the instruction is individual training by the supervisor; classroom instruction, role-playing, computer-assisted instruction, and unsupervised instruction involving audio, written, or video materials are used to aid the supervisor's teaching. Having the employee's supervisor provide the customer service training could be beneficial, since the supervisor can tailor the program to the needs of the department. Also, the supervisor is aware of the need for customer service instruction, because the

supervisor is responsible for monitoring the performance of the employee in the area of customer service to patrons. If the supervisor does not know how to train properly, the instruction may reflect the attitudes and methods of customer service held and practiced by the supervisor, good or bad.

For new employee orientation, the content of the training, covered basic information such as library policies, the location of primary resources and services, equipment training, and emergency procedures, and making referrals to other departments or employees; all these are essential in communications with patrons. Imparting to the new employee, a vision of the library's mission, the employee's role in that mission, and the role of the employee's department in that mission was discussed. Basic skills of interpersonal communication such as telephone etiquette and employee demeanor (smile, patience, friendliness) were taught. Over 50% of the libraries also provided training in dealing with irate or frustrated patrons (67%), complaint procedures (60%), and how to positively meet the customer's expectations (58%). It is significant that a substantial minority of libraries did not train their new employees on handling these situations. Often the students working at the Circulation desk, or the shelvers are the only library employees the patron meets; they may experience the patron's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the library.

Continuing Customer Service training did emphasize library policies, equipment training, and emergency procedures; less attention was placed on the location of primary resources and services. Evidently, libraries believe that employees beyond New Employee Orientation should know the location of primary resources and services. For many employees, this may not be true. If they work only in one department, they may not be aware of new resources and services in other departments. More emphasis was given to training in the more difficult interpersonal skills of meeting the customer's expectations, complaint procedures, and how to handle irate or frustrated patrons. Basic communications skills such as telephone etiquette and employee demeanor were de-emphasized, as was information about the library' s mission and the employee's role in that mission. This may be explained by the assumption of the instructors that employees with any

length of service with the library should know this information. More libraries provided training in continuing programs on how to help patrons with special needs than in New Employee Orientation. The difference in content of the two training programs is attributed to the need in New Employee Orientation to impart basic information and skills. Instruction in more difficult communication skills is beneficial to employees who have had to help those patrons with complaints or those who are angry or frustrated.

Assuming that employees in Continuing Customer Service training already have basic communication skills such as telephone etiquette and employee demeanor may be faulty. These employees may have never received instruction in the library's methods of customer service and are relying on their innate abilities. Instruction in basic communication skills should be included in the curriculum. Additionally, waiting until formal Continuing Customer Service training to provide instruction in helping patrons with special needs may cause these patrons to receive inadequate service from untrained new employees. This instruction should also be required in the training curriculum.

The data revealed that only 74% of the libraries with New Employee Orientation customer service training programs instructed their employees in emergency procedures, although 98% taught about library policies. Of libraries with Continuing Customer Service training programs, 63% instructed their employees in emergency procedures. Since the Circulation or Reference Departments would probably be responsible for evacuation of the library in case of a fire, tornado, or bomb threat, it is surprising that all do not teach this.

The Americans with Disabilities Act legislated that public institutions must provide access to their facilities for the mentally and physically disabled. Demographic information was not included in this survey, so the number of libraries that are public or private institutions cannot be learned. It is surprising that only 44% of the libraries with New Employee Orientation training provided this instruction, while 52% of the libraries with Continuing Customer Service provided it. To comply with the law, it seems that all libraries would provide teaching about how to help the

mentally and physically disabled.

Recent publications on the topic of customer service such as Suzanne Walter's Customer Service: A How-To-Do- It Manual for Libraries or Mary Cronin Azzolini and John H. Lingle's article, "Internal Service Performance" stress that a successful customer service program relies on employees giving the same high level of service to other employees as they would give customers or patrons.[112] Only 30% of the libraries with New Employee Orientation and 26% of libraries with Continuing Customer Service training taught this idea. The question was phrased "Treating staff as patrons." Among the respondents, there might have been confusion about what this meant, or this is normally expected of their employees. If these data accurately reflect the libraries, there is more emphasis on treating the patrons well and less on how to treat other staff members.

This survey displayed the strong commitment to excellent service to their patrons of over one-half of the libraries responding to this survey. Some areas of training such as communication skills in New Employee Orientation, instruction about emergency procedures, helping the disabled need to be improved. The reasons why the other half of the libraries do not have programs of formal customer service training needs to be further studied. There may be many reasons such as the perception that the patrons seem happy, so why begin a customer service training program. Others might be lack of staff or lack of funding. Since the response rate was 68%, it can be surmised that these data reflect the other nonprofit academic libraries in the state of Ohio.

The success of any customer service training program is dependent on the topics taught. Information of interest to the patron such as library policies, where the resources and services are located, and how to operate the equipment were explained. Tougher issues such as how to respond to irate or frustrated patrons, how to handle complaints, and how to meet customers' expectations were discussed. Having a patron scream in a library employee's face is an upsetting

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[112]Suzanne Walters, Customer Service: How To-Do-It Manual for Librarians (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1994), 15.

Mary Cronin Azzolini and John H. Lingle, "Internal Service Performance," Quality 32 (Nov. 1993): 38-40.

situation; guidance was provided on how to handle these difficult confrontations. These programs seem to be designed to give instruction in all aspects of the patron-employee interchange.

Academic libraries in the state of Ohio in the decade of the 1990s have had to justify their existence. They have had to justify their needs for technology, staff, and materials. Central to their struggle is the duty to provide excellent service to their patrons. If patrons who often are faculty, administration, and students are happy, many will speak in favor of the library when budget cutbacks are proposed. Over one-half of the libraries in this survey have made a commitment to provide a consistent level of customer service through training of Public Services staff. They do not want to leave it to chance that a patron is treated well, because the circulation clerk is feeling friendly today. A well-designed customer service training program can provide the level of quality service that patrons want.

Academic libraries in the state of Ohio that do not have formal customer service training programs should implement basic training programs concerning the library's mission, the employee's role in that mission, the role of the employee's department in that mission, library rules and procedures, location of resources, equipment training, emergency procedures, helping the disabled, and communication skills. This will hopefully lead to a consistency of service given to the patrons of the library. Mechanisms need to be developed to measure whether customer service training is effective in improving the quality of service given. They also should be created to measure the quality of customer service given by a library employee, and this should in their performance appraisal.

Further studies should be conducted on the reasons why approximately one-half of the academic libraries in the state of Ohio do not have formal customer service training programs; demographic information should be included. Additional studies should be conducted on the effectiveness of customer service training programs in improving the quality of customer service; also it would be helpful to learn whether employees who take these courses are evaluated on their customer service skills.

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APPENDIX A

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Cleveland, OH 44106
Ms. Christine Rom, Librarian

Cleveland Institute of Music
11021 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
Ms. Jean Toombs, Director of the Library

Cleveland State University
East 24th and Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
Ms. Hannelore B. Rader, Director of Libraries

College of Mount St. Joseph
5701 Delhi Road
Cincinnati, OH 45233
Ms. Anne W. Chase, Director of Information Services

College of Wooster
Wooster, OH 44691
Dr. Damon Hickey, Director of the Library

Columbus College of Art and Design
107 N. Ninth Street
Columbus, OH 43215
Ms. Chilin Yu, Librarian

Columbus State Community College
Box 1609
Columbus, OH 43216
Ms. Linda K. Landis, Dean Educational Resources Center

Cuyahoga Community College
700 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
Mr. Douglas A. Fox, Asst. VP Educational/Technical Resources

The Defiance College
701 N. Clinton Street
Defiance, OH 43512
Mr. Edward S. Warner, Librarian

Denison University
Granville, OH 43023
Mr. David M. Pilachowski, Director of Libraries

Dyke College
112 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
Dr. Donna R. Trivison, Director Library Resource Center

Edison State Community College
1973 Edison Drive
Piqua, OH 45356
Ms. Mary Beth Aust-Keefer, Dir. Library and Audio/Visual Services

Franciscan University of Steubenville
Steubenville, OH 43952
Mrs. Ruth Lloyd, Librarian

Franklin University
201 S. Grant Avenue
Columbus, OH 43215
Mr. Allyn K. Ehrhardt, Librarian

God's Bible School and College
1810 Young Street
Cincinnati, OH 45210

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Central Office
3101 Clifton Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45220
Dr. Herbert C. Zafren, Director of Libraries

Heidelberg College
Tiffin, OH 44883
Mr. Ed G. Krakora, Director of Library

Hiram College
Hiram, OH 44234
Dr. Patricia L. Basu, Head Librarian

Hocking Technical College
3301 Hocking Parkway
Nelsonville, OH 45764
Ms. Marge Kramer, Head Librarian

Jefferson Technical College
4000 Sunset Boulevard
Steubenville, OH 43952
Mrs Lois Rekowski, Dir. Library Services

John Carroll University
Cleveland, OH 44118
Dr. Gorman L. Duffett, Director of the Library

Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242
Dr. Don L. Tolliver, Dean University Libraries/Media Services

Kent State University Ashtabula Campus
3325 W. 13th Street
Ashtabula, OH 44004
Mr. Kim N. Cook, Library Director

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Kent State University East Liverpool Campus
400 East 4th Street
East Liverpool, OH 43920
Ms. Susan M. Weaver, Library Director

Kent State University Geauga Campus
14111 Claridon-Troy Road
Burton Twp., OH 44021

Kent State University Salem Campus
2491 S R 45 South
Salem, OH 44460
Ms. Lilith R. Kunkel, Dir. Library

Kent State University Stark Campus
6000 Frank Avenue NW
Canton, OH 44720
Ms. Judith Ohles, Library Director

Kent State University Trumbull Campus
4314 Mahoning Avenue NW
Warren, OH 44483

Kent State University Tuscarawas Campus
University Drive NE
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
Mr. G. Michael Kobulnicky, Librarian

Kenyon College
Gambier OH 43022
Mr. Paul M. Gherman, Director of Libraries

Kettering College of Medical Arts
3737 Southern Boulevard
Kettering, OH 45429
Mrs. Ellen L. Rohmiller, Director of the Library

Lake Erie College
391 W. Washington Street
Painesville, OH 44077
Christopher Bennett, Librarian

Lakeland Community College
7700 Clocktower Drive
Mentor, OH 44060
Ms. Mary Jo Magner, Director Library

Lima Technical College
4240 Campus Drive
Lima, OH 45804
Dr. Mohamed Zehery, Head Librarian

Lorain County Community College
1005 N. Abbe Road
Elyria, OH 44035
Mr. Leslie Z. Loranth, Dir. Library-Instructional Media

Lourdes College
6832 Convent Boulevard
Sylvania, OH 43560
Sr. Thomas More Ruffing, OSF, Librarian

Malone College
515 25th Street NW
Canton, OH 44709
Mr. R. Stanford Terhune, Jr., Director of Library Services

Marietta College
Marietta, OH 45750
Ms. Sandra B. Neyman, College Librarian

Marion Technical College
1467 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Marion, OH 43302

Medical College of Ohio
P. O. Box 10008
Toledo, OH 43699
Mr. David Boiland, Director of Library

Methodist Theological School in Ohio
3081 Columbus Pike
P. O. Box 1204
Delaware, OH 43015
Dr. Paul Schrodt, Librarian

Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056
Ms. Judith A. Sessions, Dean and University Librarian

Miami University Hamilton Campus
1601 Peck Boulevard
Hamilton, OH 45011
Ms. Rebecca Zartner, Head Librarian

Miami University Middletown Campus
4200 E. University Boulevard
Middletown, OH 45042
Mr. Joseph Phillips, Director of Regional Campus Library

Mount Carmel College of Nursing
127 S. Davis Avenue
Columbus, OH 43222

Mount Union College
1972 Clark Avenue
Alliance, OH 44601
Mr. Robert R. Garland, Librarian

Mount Vernon Nazarene College
Martinsburg Road
Mount Vernon, OH 43050
Mr. Richard L. Schuster, Librarian

Muskingum Area Technical College
1555 Newark Road
Zanesville, OH 43701
Ms. Shana Fair, Librarian

Muskingum College
New Concord, OH 43762
Mrs. Robin G. Hanson, Director of Library

North Central Technical College
2441 Kenwood Cir. Box 698
Mansfield, OH 44901
Ms. Sherri L. Edwards, Librarian

Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
P.O. Box 95
Rootstown, OH 44272
Ms. Jean W. Sayre, Director Medical Librarian

Northwest State Community College
22-600 SR 34 Rt 1 Box 246a
Archbold, OH 43502
(vacant), Head Librarian

Northwestern College
1441 North Cable Road
Lima, OH 45805

Notre Dame College
4545 College Road
South Euclid, OH 44121
Ms. Karen Zoller, Director of Library

Oberlin College
Oberlin, OH 44074
Dr. Raymond English, Director of Libraries

Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine
10515 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106
Mrs. Judy A. Cowell, Librarian

Ohio Dominican College
1216 Sunbury Road
Columbus, OH 43219
Ms. Trisha Morris, Librarian

Ohio Northern University
Ada, OH 45810
Mr. Paul M. Logsdon, Librarian

The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute
Wooster, OH 44691

The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210
Dr. William J. Studer, Director of Libraries

The Ohio State University Lima Campus
4240 Campus Drive
Lima, OH 45804
Dr. Mohamed H. Zehery, Librarian

The Ohio State University Mansfield Campus
1680 University Drive
Mansfield, OH 44906
Ms. Sherri L. Edwards, Head Librarian

The Ohio State University Marion Campus
1465 Mount Vernon Avenue
Marion, OH 43302
Mr. David G. Evans, Librarian

The Ohio State University Newark Campus
University Drive
Newark, OH 43055
Ms. Louisa Straziuso, Head Learning Resourses Center

Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701
Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee, Dean of Libraries

Ohio University Chillicothe Campus
Chillicothe, OH 45601
Mr. Stanley Planton, Head Librarian

Ohio University Eastern Campus
St. Clairsville, OH 43950
Ms. Patricia E. Murphy, Director of Library

Ohio University Lancaster Campus
1570 Granville Pike
Lancaster, OH 43130
Ms. Susan K. Phillips, Librarian

Ohio University Zanesville Branch
Zanesville, OH 43701
Mrs. Shana Fair, Librarian

Ohio Wesleyan University
Delaware, OH 43015
Ms. Kathleen L. List, Librarian

Otterbein College
Westerville, OH 43081
Mrs. Lois F. Szudy, Director of the Library

Owens Community College
30335 Oregon Road
P.O. Box 10000
Toledo, OH 43699

Payne Theological Seminary
1230 Wilberforce Clifton Rd.
Wilberforce, OH 45384
Mr. Dale Balsbaugh, Head Librarian

Pontifical College Josephinum
7625 N. High
Columbus, OH 43235
Mr. Peter Veracka, Librarian

Rabbinical College of Telshe
28400 Euclid Avenue
Wickliffe, OH 44092

Saint Mary Seminary
28700 Euclid Avenue
Wickliffe, OH 44092
Mr. Alan Rome, Librarian

Shawnee State University
940 Second Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662
Ms. Teresa Midkiff, Dir. Library/Media Services

Sinclair Community College
444 W. Third Street
Dayton, OH 45402
Mrs. Virginia Peters, Dir. Learning Resources Center

Southern State Community College
200 Hobart Drive
Hillsboro, OH 45133
Mr. Louis Mays, Library Coordinator

Stark Technichal College
6200 Frank Avenue NW
Canton, OH 44720

Terra State Community College
2830 Napoleon Road
Fremont, OH 43420
Ms. Mary Broestl, Librarian

Tiffin University
155 Miami Street
Tiffin, OH 44883
Miss Frances A. Fleet, Head Librarian

Trinity Lutheran Seminary
2199 E. Main St.
Columbus, OH 43209
Rev. Richard H. Mintel, Dir. Library Services

Union Institute
440 E. McMillan Street
Cincinnati, OH 45206

United Theological Seminary
1810 Harvard Boulevard
Dayton, OH 45406
Rev. Elmer J. O'Brien, Librarian

The University of Akron
The Buchtel Common
Akron, OH 44325
Dr. Delmus E. Williams, Dean University Libraries

University of Akron-Wayne College
10470 Smucker Road
Orrville, OH 44667
Mrs. Barbara Geisey, Librarian

University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH 45221
Dr. David F. Kohl., Dean & University Librarian

University of Cincinnati-Clermont College
4200 Clermont College Drive
Batavia, OH 45103
Mr. Frederick Marcotte, Senior Librarian

University of Cincinnati-Raymond Walters College
9555 Plainfield Road
Blue Ash, OH 45236

University of Dayton
300 College Park
Dayton, OH 45469
Dr. Edward D. Garten, Dir. University Libraries

The University of Findlay
1000 North Main Street
Findlay, OH 45840
Mr. Robert W. Schirmer, Head Librarian

University of Rio Grande
Rio Grande, OH 45674
Mr. J. David Mauer, Director of the Library

University of Toledo
2801 West Bancroft
Toledo, OH 43606
Mr. Leslie W. Sheridan, Dir. University Libaries

Urbana University
Urbana, OH 43078
Mr. Hugh Durbin, University Librarian

Ursuline College
2550 Lander Road
Cleveland, OH 44124
Ms. Betsey Belkin, Director of Library

Walsh University
3220 Easton Street NW
Canton, OH 44720
Mr. Daniel S. Suvak, Librarian

Washington State Community College
710 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750

Wilberforce University
Wilberforce, OH 45384
Mrs. Jean K. Mulhern, Chief Librarian

Wilmington College
Wilmington, OH 45177
Ms. Jennilou S. Grotevant, Library Director

Winebrenner Theological Seminary
Findlay, OH 45840
Dr. J. Harvey Gossard, Dir. of Library Services

Wittenberg University
Ward St Wittenberg Avenue
Springfield, OH 45501
(vacant), Director of the Library

Wright State University
Colonel Glenn Highway
Dayton, OH 45435
Mr. Arnold Hirshon, Director, University Libraries

Wright State University Lake Campus
7600 State Route 703
Celina, OH 45822

Xavier University
Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45207
Dr. Jo Anne L. Young, Director of Libraries

Youngstown State University
Youngstown, OH 44455
Dr. David C. Genaway, University Librarian

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire explores the training given public services staff. For the purpose of this questionnaire, *public services staff* will be defined as those library employees who are employed in the Circulation and Reference departments. *Customer service* is defined as all contact with patrons by the public services staff employees. Included in this definition would be directional assistance, telephone calls, written requests for assistance, reference help, and the many other contacts between the library's employees and patrons. *Training* is defined as formal programs of instruction in customer service offered to public services staff by library or institution administration.

Please answer the following questions. Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

1. Is any formal customer service training offered by the library administration, branch, or department, to staff of public services departments? If not, please proceed to Question 15.

	n	%
_____ yes _____ no	*YES 43*	*51%*
	NO 42	*49%*

Customer service training during NEW employee orientation

2. Below is a list of content items that might be a part of customer service training for NEW employees. Please check all the items that are part of your training program.

	n	%
_____ the library's mission	*34*	*79%*
_____ the employee's role in that mission	*29*	*67%*
_____ the role of the employee's department in that mission	*21*	*49%*
_____ library policies	*42*	*98%*
_____ location of primary resources and services	*40*	*93%*
_____ emergency procedures	*32*	*74%*
_____ communications skills	*20*	*47%*
_____ making referrals to other departments or employees	*35*	*81%*
_____ telephone etiquette	*32*	*75%*
_____ employee demeanor (smile, patience, friendliness)	*30*	*70%*
_____ how to positively meet the customer's expectations	*25*	*58%*
_____ treating staff as patrons	*13*	*30%*
_____ dealing with irate or frustrated patrons	*29*	*67%*
_____ complaint procedures	*26*	*60%*
_____ helping patrons with special needs	*19*	*44%*
_____ equipment training	*37*	*86%*
_____ problem solving skills	*14*	*33%*
_____ other	*4*	*9%*
_____ none of the above	*0*	*0%*

3. Are prepared training materials used for this customer service training? If no, please proceed to question 5.

	n	%
_____ yes _____ no	*YES 27*	*63%*
	NO 15	*35%*
	N/A 1	*2%*

4. In what format are the prepared training materials? (Please check all that apply):

	n	%
_____ written	*27*	*100%*
_____ audio tapes	*1*	*4%*
_____ video tapes	*4*	*15%*
_____ computer programs	*0*	*0%*
_____ other	*4*	*15%*

5. What type of instruction is used? (Please check all that apply):	n	%
_____ classroom instruction	9	21%
_____ individual training by supervisor	40	93%
_____ role-playing	3	7%
_____ computer-assisted instruction	2	5%
_____ unsupervised instruction involving written, audio, or video material	16	37%

6. Who provides the customer service training? (Please check all that apply):	n	%
_____ Circulation or Reference Department supervisor	35	81%
_____ Human Resources/Training inside library	5	12%
_____ Human Resources/Training of parent institution	6	14%
_____ outside consultant	3	7%
_____ other	11	26%

7. Is the customer service training mandatory or optional?	n	%
_____ mandatory _____ optional	MANDATORY 39	91%
	OPTIONAL 2	4.5%
	N/A 2	4.5%

Education and training beyond new employee orientation

8. After new employee training is finished, is further customer service training available to Public Services staff employees? If no, please proceed to question 15.	n	%
_____ yes _____ no	YES 27	63%
	NO 14	33%
	N/A 2	4%

9. Below is a list of content items that might be a part of continuing customer service training for regular employees. Please check all the items that are part of your training program.	n	%
_____ the library's mission	12	44%
_____ the employee's role in that mission	12	44%
_____ the role of the employee's department in that mission	7	16%
_____ library policies	23	85%
_____ location of primary resources and services	16	59%
_____ emergency procedures	17	63%
_____ communications skills	12	44%
_____ making referrals to other departments or employees	13	48%
_____ telephone etiquette	12	44%
_____ employee demeanor (smile, patience, friendliness)	12	44%
_____ how to positively meet the customer's expectations	18	67%
_____ treating staff as patrons	7	26%
_____ dealing with irate or frustrated patrons	17	63%
_____ complaint procedures	16	60%
_____ helping patrons with special needs	14	52%
_____ equipment training	19	70%
_____ problem solving skills	13	48%
_____ other	5	12%
_____ none of the above	0	0%

10. Are prepared training materials used for continuing customer service training? If no, please proceed to question 12.	n	%
_____ yes _____ no	YES 13	48%
	NO 13	48%
	N/A 1	4%

11. In what format are the prepared training materials for continuing customer service training? (Please check all that apply):

	n	%
_____ written	13	100%
_____ audio tapes	2	15%
_____ video tapes	4	31%
_____ computer programs	1	8%
_____ other	4	31%

12. What type of instruction is used for continuing customer service training? (Please check all that apply):

	n	%
_____ classroom instruction	12	44%
_____ individual training by supervisor	23	85%
_____ role-playing	1	4%
_____ computer-assisted instruction	2	7%
_____ unsupervised instruction involving written, audio, or video material	8	30%

13. Who provides the continuing customer service training? (Please check all that apply):

	n	%
_____ Circulation Department supervisor	19	70%
_____ Reference Department supervisor	21	77%
_____ Human Resources/Training inside library	4	15%
_____ Human Resources/Training of parent institution	6	22%
_____ outside consultant	7	26%
_____ other	8	30%

14. Is the continuing customer service training mandatory or optional?

_____ mandatory _____ optional

	n	%
MANDATORY	20	74%
OPTIONAL	7	26%

15. Are funds available for library staff members who wish to seek further training outside the library system?

_____ yes _____ no

	n	%
YES	35	76.5%
NO	19	22%
N/A	1	1.5%

16. If your library has a formal customer service training program, who was involved in the formation of the program? (Please check all that apply.)

	n	%
_____ library administration	26	60%
_____ department heads	19	44%
_____ professional librarians	26	60%
_____ support staff	19	44%
_____ human resources department of library	3	7%
_____ human resources department of parent institution	3	7%
_____ other institution departments	1	2%
_____ outside consultants	1	2%
_____ other	2	5%

Please return this questionnaire to:
Elizabeth L. Plummer
813 Vale Court
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

APPENDIX C

POSTCARD

Customer service is an important topic for academic libraries. I am investigating the degree and extent of customer service training given to academic library employees. In one week, you will be receiving a questionnaire. Would you kindly complete and return it at your earliest convenience. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Plummer
Graduate Student
School of Library and Information Science
Kent State University

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Date

Name of Library Director
Address

RE: Customer Service Policy Questionnaire

Dear:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. As part of the requirements for my master's degree, I am conducting a study about customer service training for Public Services (Circulation, Reference Services) staff in academic libraries. The enclosed questionnaire elicits information concerning the degree and extent of customer service training given to Public Services staff in academic libraries. I am interested in training given to new employees and training given beyond the new employee orientation period.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed as you need not sign your name to individual questionnaires; only the investigator has access to the survey data. Questionnaires will be coded solely for followup purposes; the codes will be destroyed upon completion of the research. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose to not participate in this study, or if you would withdraw from participation at any time. While your cooperation is essential to the success of this study, it is, of course, voluntary. A copy of the results of this study will be made available upon request.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact me at (419) 352-5787 or Richard Rubin, my research advisor, at (216) 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at (216) 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation; it is much appreciated. You may return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope to me at the following address:

Elizabeth L. Plummer
813 Vale Court
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Plummer
Graduate Student

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOLLOWUP

Date

Name of Library Director
Address

RE: Questionnaire Followup

Dear:

Approximately three weeks ago, a questionnaire concerning customer service training in academic libraries was mailed to you for completion and return. Unfor-tunately, it has not been returned as of the above date. Therefore, I am sending you another copy of the questionnaire with a stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed for your convenience.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please disregard this letter and accept my thanks for your participation in the survey.

If you have any questions or comments, please call me at (419) 352-5787.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Plummer
813 Vale Court
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402